SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER 2017

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by ……. [your name, call sign and QTH]

You may tune in to the South African Radio League news bulletin on Sunday mornings, at 08:15 Local Time in Afrikaans and at 08:30 Local Time in English, on HF as well as on many VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. Echolink listeners may connect to ZS6JPL for a relay. A podcast is available from the League s web site.

This audio bulletin may be downloaded from the League's website at www.sarl.org.za where you will find this as well as previous bulletins in text format under the news link on the left-hand side of the web page. While you are there, you may sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

We start the Bulletin with news of a Silent Key

It is with deep regret that the Cape Town Amateur Radio Centre must announce that the key of a long time and well respected life member of the Club, Bernie Crockford, ZS1BW, went silent on Friday 22 December 2017. Bernie was also a Honorary Life Member of the SARL.

We extend our sincerest condolences to his XYL Sylvia, family and friends.

PAUSE

In the news, today:

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE LEAGUE PRESIDENT

EXCITING CHANGE FOR AMATEUR RADIO TODAY

and

FIRST SPORADIC-E OPENING ON 50 MHZ REPORTED THIS SEASON

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE LEAGUE PRESIDENT

Nico van Rensburg, ZS6QL, says, "It is hard to believe that 2017 is almost at an end and traditionally it is the time of the year to take that well deserved break during the holiday and festive season, spending time with our families. Do take advantage of this festive season to relax enjoy the hobby and remember to catch up with your amateur radio friends, wherever they are in the world, as amateur radio has made this quite a tradition long before the internet and social media were conceived.

Of note is the fact that the work of the SARL relies altogether on the many volunteers who offer their unstinting support to the league. This includes all our members and the clubs that form the backbone of amateur radio in South Africa. It is therefore appropriate to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to

every SARL member for your dedicated support, active involvement, generous financial donations and selfless contributions of time and, in many cases, hard labour within our amateur fraternity during the year.

I am looking forward to everyone's continued support and commitment in 2018, as together we strive to develop and advance the amateur radio service into the future. The League's Council and I wish our members and their families the very best for the holidays and festive season."

EXCITING CHANGE FOR AMATEUR RADIO TODAY

Exciting changes are in store for the SARL Magazine programme, Amateur Radio Today. Early in the New Year the programme will be in English only and will have an expanded subject content with the main focus on technology and activities that drive the growth of Amateur Radio, not just in South Africa but also on the African Continent and surrounding islands.

The new format will also meet the IARU's call to focus on the expansion of Amateur Radio in Africa and will become more in line with Sentech s expectation that the programme must focus on technical development and encourage experimentation.

The Afrikaans insert, 'Amateur Radio in Aksie' will shift to an earlier slot between 9.30 - 10 am local time. It will be available on the SARL website for download. Clubs are invited to transmit the programme on local repeaters at 9.30 am or at any other time to fit in with their 'local-on-the-air' activities. Stay tuned for more details in SARL News and on the web

DEVICES THAT CAUSE INTERFERENCE SURVEY

Last week's call on SARL News to participate in a survey of devices in your house and radio room that may add to the increase in the RF noise level went largely unsupported. Thanks to the few who made the effort to send in information. In case you missed it here are the details again.

Radio Amateurs are invited to make contributions to a survey of devices in your house and radio room that may cause increases in the noise level in the RF spectrum. During the International Special Committee on Radio Interference (CISPR) plenary meeting in Hangzhou, the IARU raised a question on whether the increasing number of electronic devices in households is properly reflected during the process of setting limits for single products. The Steering committee discussed the issue and concluded that the number of devices used in a certain environment is not reflected in the standards and that the number of devices in use may in some cases be very difficult to estimate.

The Steering committee further concluded that this issue is not trivial, and more research is necessary before any concept of adjusting limits, to consider multiple interference sources, can be included in the limit setting process. CISPR members are asked to provide any information that can be used to determine the

impact on radio reception by the increasing number of electronic devices being used.

What the SARL would like you to do is to look around your house and list all the devices that you consider are devices that may be the source of interference on the radio spectrum. The following is a list of possible problem sources: cell-phone chargers, LED lights, power-saving lights, electronic fluorescent lights, battery chargers, electric toothbrushes, power-banks, solar panels and switch-mode power supplies. Do the same for devices in your radio room.

Send the information to artoday@sarl.org,za before 31 December 2017. You can make a difference.

JANUARY 2018 RADIO ZS

The closing date for your article for the January 2018 issue of Radio ZS is Tuesday 26 December 2017 and you can send it to radiozs@sarl.org.za. Thank you to Andre, ZS2BK, Henry, ZS1AAZ and Mike, ZS2FM, for their articles.

The Editor notes that 1 368 copies of the October 2017 Radio ZS were download compared to 623 copies of the November issue and 434 copies of the December issue. You can find back copies of Radio ZS going back to July 1947 from the download page.

You are listening to a news Bulletin of the South African Amateur Radio League.

RADIO AMATEUR EXAMINATIONS 2018

It is nearly that time of year again for clubs to start recruiting candidates for the first semester RAE. Please take note of the following dates for 2018:

First semester RAE RAE registration system opens 22 January 2018. RAE registration system closes 22 April 2018. RAE exam Saturday 19 May 2018 10:00 to 13:00 CAT

Second Semester RAE RAE registration system opens 14 July 2018. RAE registration system closes 16 September 2018. RAE exam Saturday 13 October 2018 10:00 to 13:00 CAT

2018 SARL BLUE BOOK AND DIARY OF EVENTS

The 2018 SARL Blue Book and the Diary of Events are both available for download from the League's web site. Please note that the rules of several contests have changed, including a new VHF/UHF contest. Make sure you have the new Blue Book before the 2018 contests start! The Diary of Events also contains information about the SARL Awards, the IARU Awards, Summits on the Air and the Southern African Fauna and Flora programme. FIRST SPORADIC-E OPENING ON 50 MHZ REPORTED THIS SEASON

Paul Smit, ZS6NK, at Polokwane was alerted by Willie Hewitt, ZS2CC, in George that he could hear 11 metre Citizen Band signals and the ZS6JON beacon on 50,050 MHz CW. The Sporadic E opening occurred on 19 December 2017

from 09:45 CAT until 10:50 CAT when Paul worked Hans Potgieter, ZS1ALJ, on CW and then on SSB followed by Mike Kellett, ZS1TAF in Cape Town. Now is the time to keep an eye on distant 50 MHz beacons or FM broadcasting stations for those unexpected openings on Sporadic E.

LOOK OUT FOR LU AND PY STATIONS ON 50 MHZ SSSP

Skeds have been arranged with stations in Argentina and Brazil between 10:00 and 13:00 UTC during the Short-path Summer Solstice Propagation (SSSP) season by Pieter Jacobs, V51PJ, in Namibia. They will be using 50,250 MHz digital and alternate between FT8 and JT65a modes. All ZS VHF stations are welcome to join in the tests and could also try analogue on 50,110 MHz, the international DX calling frequency.

Many 50 MHz SSSP contacts have already been made over the years on analogue between Japan and Europe, during their summer solstice in June, while in the southern hemisphere New Zealand has hooked up with South American stations. All ZS stations are welcome to join in the tests. Australian stations have already alerted us that they will be looking for Division 2 and 5 stations in South Africa on 50,276 MHz JT65a second period or try 50,110 MHz for analogue. So, the possibility is there for South African stations to work Australia and/or New Zealand on 50 MHz SSSP for the first time.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to be at low levels. Rapidly expanding sunspot AR2692 is crackling with minor B-class solar flares. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around four. The 15 to 30 metre bands will provide lots of DX fun. Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

Finally, a Diary of some upcoming events:

December: 25 Christmas Day. 26 Family Day. 27 - closing date for January 2018 Radio ZS. 31 - End of 2017 CQ Marathon and YOTA month.

January 2018: 1 New Year s Day; start of the 2018 CQ DX Marathon and the ARRL International Grid Chase. 6 Pretoria ARC Flea Market. 13 and 14 Hunting Lions in the Air

To conclude our bulletin a quick overview of our main news item:

Nico van Rensburg, ZS6QL, says, “It is hard to believe that 2017 is almost at an end and traditionally it is the time of the year to take that well deserved break during the holiday and festive season, spending time with our families. Do take advantage of this festive season to relax enjoy the hobby and remember to catch up with your amateur radio friends, wherever they are in the world, as amateur radio has made this quite a tradition long before the internet and social media were conceived.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

Clubs and individuals are invited to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items for inclusion in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio program, 'Amateur Radio Today' at 10:00 Central African Time. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a podcast available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 4 895 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentech sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Andy Cairns, ZS6ADY, edited by Dick Stratford, ZS6RO, and read by ……..

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.

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